DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 332 982 SP 033 096

AUTHOR Boccia, Judith A.

TITLE Beginning Teachers Speak Out: A Study of Professional Concerns in the First Three Years of Teaching. Part II, Elementary Teachers.

PUB DATE Apr 91

NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, April 3-7, 1991). For an earlier report, see ED 316 555.

PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Age Differences; *Beginning Teacher Induction; *Beginning Teachers; *Classroom Environment; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Teachers; Higher Education; Interprofessional Relationship; Needs Assessment; Preservice Teacher Education; Questionnaires; Teacher Attitudes; *Teaching Conditions; Teaching Experience

IDENTIFIERS University of Lowell MA

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to: (1) determine the concerns of beginning elementary teachers; (2) identify perceived successes of novice teachers; (3) learn the extent of orientation provided; (4) ascertain the kinds of professional support received from fellow teachers and administrators; (5) identify the kinds of professional assistance needed; and (6) relate findings from these objectives to such variables as year of teaching, age of respondent, classroom structure, kind of community, and work conditions. The instrument used to collect data was a questionnaire mailed to 115 elementary certification graduates of the classes of 1986-1989 of the University of Lowell's (Massachusetts) graduate program in teaching. Responses were returned by 68 (59 percent) of the graduates. Results of the study suggest that beginning elementary teachers give more weight to concerns of an instructional rather than administrative or organizational nature and that they focus on topics related to the teaching task as well as on issues pertaining to collegial relations. Record keeping and district administration received little attention from the group. The findings in this study imply that inclusion of research on beginning teachers may better prepare graduates for their initial teaching experience. (28 references) (LL)

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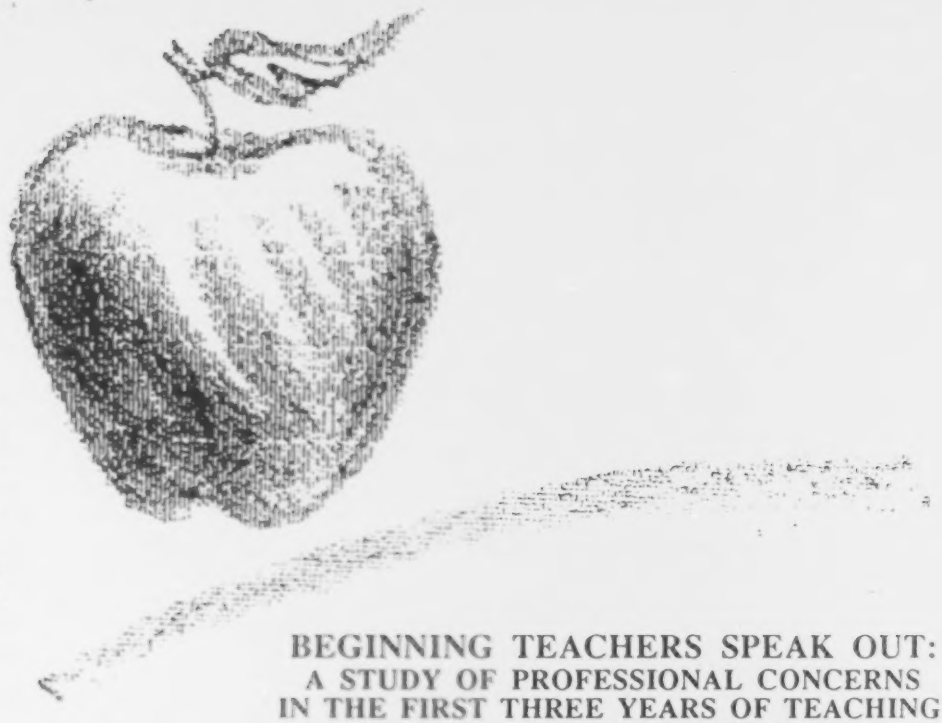

BEGINNING TEACHERS SPEAK OUT: A STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL CONCERNS IN THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF TEACHING, *PART II, ELEMENTARY TEACHERS*

Judith A. Boccia

Center for Field Services and Studies
College of Education
University of Lowell

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, April 1991

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BEGINNING TEACHERS SPEAK OUT:
A STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL CONCERNS IN THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF TEACHING, PART II: ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

OBJECTIVES

The goal of this study is to learn about the professional experience, concerns, successes and need for assistance of beginning elementary teachers who are graduates of a fifth year, master's program in a large public university in Massachusetts. This paper reports the second phase of a three-part project which began with study of secondary beginning teachers in 1988 (Boccia) and was reported at AERA in 1989 (Boccia). Data from both phases of the study will be used to develop a support program for novice teachers, to improve the relevance of preservice education, and to advise school administrators and mentor teachers working with beginning teachers. Specific objectives of this phase of the study include:

1. determination of the classroom concerns of beginning elementary teachers;
2. determination of outside the classroom concerns of beginning elementary teachers;
3. identification of perceived successes of beginning elementary teachers;
4. learning the nature and extent of orientation to district and school building provided to beginning elementary teachers;
5. ascertaining the kinds of professional support beginning elementary teachers receive from fellow teachers and from administrators;
6. identification of the kinds of professional help beginning teachers would find useful, including the schedule and frequency such help should be provided;
7. relating the findings from objectives 1-6 to such variables as year of teaching, age of respondent, classroom structure, kind of community, and work conditions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this study is drawn from several research areas. Empirical and descriptive studies of beginning teachers' experience provide a rationale for focusing on the professional concerns of new teachers. Notably, Veenman's (1984) summary of research on beginning teachers' problems highlights recurrent concerns reported by novices, and a host of later studies examines the reasons and conditions for such concerns (Adams, 1982; Bullough, 1989; Butler & Smith, 1989; Friske & Coombs, 1986; Marso & Pigge, 1987; Odell, 1987; Rosenholtz,1989). Additionally, demographic study of those entering the field of teaching, especially that related to second-career beginning teachers, suggests a different profile for the "typical" new teacher than we have commonly assumed (Cohen & Klink, 1989; Friedus, 1989; Lortie, 1975; Rife, Maloy & Keefe, 1988), a profile which may include different concerns than those identified in earlier work. Responses to beginning teacher concerns, in particular the varieties of induction models generated by state agencies, professional groups, universities, and local districts, also shape this research.(Bey & Holmes, 1990; Goodman, 1987 Huling-Austin, Odell, Isler, Kay & Edelfelt, 1989; Jordell, 1987; Morey & Murphy, 1990; Wildman, Niles, Magliaro & McLaughlin, 1989). Finally, research on school culture and school change related to teachers (Lortie, 1975; Lieberman & Miller, 1984) provides a frame of reference for the practical goal of this study, design of an induction program responsive to all parties invested in beginning teacher success: the teacher, the school system, and the profession.

METHODOLOGY

The Sample Group

The sample is 115 (of 122) elementary certification graduates with validated addresses from the classes of 1986, 1987, 1988, and 1989 from the University of Lowell's Graduate Program in Teaching. The population was selected because members of these classes, if employed, were in their early years of teaching. Our experience with the previous survey suggests that even graduates

from 1986 could be in their first three years of teaching, given the limited job market and life choices prior respondents had made to delay entry to the profession. Therefore, these graduates represent a range of beginning teacher stages and perspectives.

Instrument

The instrument used to collect data is a 201 item mail questionnaire (Boccia, 1990) constructed and implemented according to the Dillman Total Design Method for Mail and Telephone Surveys (1978). The questionnaire is a version of the one developed for the secondary study in 1988 (Boccia) with key questions relating to concerns, successes, induction experience and kinds of assistance desired consistent with the earlier study. As was the case for the 1988 study, content questions were drawn from the literature on beginning teaching, while attribute and context questions were developed based on interviews with elementary teachers, principals and preservice supervisors as well as other studies. In addition to the quantitative data generated by the instrument, open-ended questions and commentary sections throughout the questionnaire provide qualitative understanding of many responses, and the opportunity for respondents to raise questions and issues not specified in the form.

Initial mailout was done in mid-July, 1990, with a follow-up postcard the next week. A second mailing to non-respondents was sent to those who had not replied by September.

Response Rate

Completed questionnaires were received from 68 (59%) of the 115 graduates we located. Fifteen additonal respondents (13%) did not complete the questionnaire for a variety of reasons, and 32 (28%) did not reply.

Analysis of Data

Statistical procedures used for data analysis included frequencies and breakdowns. The findings which resulted are considered indicative of professional concerns, perceived successes and kinds of assistance desired by beginning elementary teachers who are graduates of fifth year programs, and in particular who are embarking on second careers in the field of education. More

definitive findings must await further analysis of the data, as well as expansion of the respondent base and/or replication of the study in other settings.

FINDINGS

Findings are reported and discussed on the topics of professional concerns, both those germane to the classroom setting and those which relate to other teacher responsibilities, successes in teaching, and kinds of assistance beginning elementary teachers want provided. The other data collected in this study, such as context material and anecdotal information, is used to interpret the key topics of concerns, successes, and desired assistance.

Respondent Characteristics

The 68 respondents were elementary certified teachers in their first (38%), second (32%), third (18%), or later years of teaching. Those reporting more than three years of teaching had done some work without certification or at some other level of schooling. The 65 women and 3 men in the study represented a range of ages from the early 20's to mid 50's, with 87% over the age of 25, and half of those between 26 and 30 years of age. Prior to enrolling in the graduate teacher program, 75% of the beginning teachers had been employed in professional, clerical or service positions, including 24% in some field of education (U.S. Department of Labor, 1977). Two thirds of the respondents expect to continue teaching indefinitely, while others have shorter career terms or no certainty about their futures. Most (77%) of the respondents belong to one or more professional organizations and read at least one professional journal.

Context Characteristics

Context variables for the respondent group include information about their teaching assignment, location and work conditions. Most (91%) were assigned to work in their field of certification, and nearly 60% had been in their present school one year of less. The schools typically enrolled fewer than 600 students (82%), and were located in Massachusetts or New Hampshire suburban (47%), urban (37%), or rural (13%) communities. The dominant

organizational arrangement for teaching by the respondents was in self-contained classrooms (56%), with team teaching (22%) and support service settings such as remedial reading and language assistance (22%) comprising class structure for the balance of the group. Class size for these beginning teachers ranged from a low of 15 to more than 30, with 44% teaching in classes of 21-25 students. Adult assistance, usually an aide, was provided in 35% of the cases and in varied amounts of time. All the respondents had at least one grade level colleague, and the range extended to six. Orientation to schools and districts was provided for about one third of the respondents and took the form of a general introduction to policy and procedures. Less than 20% of the sample had an orientation specifically for teachers new to the profession. While only 28% were assigned an experienced teacher to provide help, 96% sought help from a veteran colleague. In addition, 84% of the group received assistance from the principal and grade-level peers, 91% found such assistance helpful, but only 57% thought it was adequate to their needs as beginning teachers. Finally, extra-curricular responsibilities were required of 21% of the group.

Professional Concerns and Successes - A Review of the Findings

Overall, elementary beginning teachers in this study had the same professional concerns as those reported in Veenman's review (1984) of 83 beginning teacher studies, although levels of concern varied somewhat. Table 1 presents the rank order of 18 classroom concerns.

Table 1

Rank Order of Classroom Concerns
by Mean Response Values
(Scale; 5=Very High; 4 =High; 3=Moderate; 2= Low; 1= Very Low)
n=68

Rank Order	Topic	Mean Values
1	Lesson and Unit Planning	4.13
2	Classroom Control, Management	4.07
3	Relevance of Subject Matter to Students	4.04
4-5	Dealing with Individual Differences	4.03
4-5	Handling Students with Special Needs	4.03
6	Assessing Student Learning	4.00
7	Knowledge of Varied Teaching Techniques	3.99
8	Rapport with Students	3.96
9	Obtaining Sufficient Supplies, Materials	3.94
10	Own Knowledge of Curriculum Materials	3.93
11-12	Time Spent in Preparation, Evaluation	3.85
11-12	Knowledge of Child Development	3.85
13	Skill in Conducting A Good Discussion	3.82
14	Grouping for Effective Instruction	3.80
15	Knowledge of Content Area	3.75
16	Class Size	3.45
17	Record Keeping, Administrative Matters	3.43
18	Standardized Testing	2.65

Despite the moderate to high response value for this category overall (3.82), and diversity of concern reflected within it, only four of the 18 topics were identified by at least 20% of the group as among their most important concerns. The four topics so named included the ubiquitous classroom control issue (44%), lesson and unit planning (32%), dealing with individual differences (24%), and time spent in preparation and evaluation (21%).

Outside the classroom concerns were similarly diverse but generally less worrisome to respondents, according to the mean response value for the category as a whole (3.20), as well as individual questions. Table 2 detail the scores for each outside the classroom concern.

Table 2

Rank Order of Outside Classroom Concerns by Mean Response Values
(Scale: 5= Very High; 4=High; 3=Moderate: 2=Low; 1=Very Low)
(n=68)

Rank Order	Topic	Mean Values
1	Relations with Parents	4.03
2	Special School Services	3.64
3	Physical/Emotional Stress	3.61
4	Learning How Things Are Done	3.42
5	Understanding Community	3.36
6	Teacher Legal Rights	3.33
7	Community Resources	3.30
8	Student Legal Rights	3.22
9	Building Administration	3.09
10	Extracurricular Assignments	2.94
11	Isolation from Other Teachers	2.91
12	Understanding Union Issues	2.70
13	District Administration	2.69
14	Duty Assignments	2.60

Although the table suggests that except for relations with parents, outside classroom concerns are not of great worry to the respondents, a separate ranking of each respondent's top three concerns reinforces the importance of the group ranking. That is, the same three top items in the group list were identified by 25% of more respondents as among the most important concerns. Specifically, 41% chose parent relations, 29% selected special school services, and 25% named physical/emotional stress as one of their top three outside classroom concerns.

Successes

The variety and level of their professional concerns notwithstanding, respondents were quite positive about their early successes in teaching. Table 3 lists the 12 areas of practice in which 40% or more new teachers reported success.

Table 3

Top Rated Topics of Teacher Success Ranked by Frequency and Percentage of Respondents Rating Each Topic Highest
(n=68)

Rank Order	Topic	Frequency	Percent
1	Relationships with Students	62	91%
2	Sense of Humor	56	82%
3	Collegiality with Other Faculty	45	66%
4	Creativity in Lesson Planning	40	58%
5	Knowledge of Content Area	39	59%
6-7	Make Content Relevant to Students	38	56%
6-7	Classroom Management	38	56%
8-9-10	Varied Teaching Techniques	32	47%
8-9-10	Conducting Good Discussions	32	47%
8-9-10	Using Small Groups	32	47%
11	Finding Resources	29	43%
12	Interdisciplinary Curriculum	28	41%

Of particular interest in this list of successes is the presence of the three highest classroom concerns topics (see Table 1, p. 5), ranked here as items 4 and 6-7. Additionally, all but item 12 on the success list also received at least a 3.75 score on the concerns list. While an apparent contradiction, the assessment of topics as both successes and concerns suggests that respondents are learning that teaching success must be re-created every day in the classroom and that teaching skill development is a continuous process.

Another noteworthy finding in the successes inventory is the nature of the three top-rated topics. All deal with interpersonal relations and, taken as a piece, indicate a level of integration into the work environment essential for endurance in the profession.

Breakdowns of Concerns and Successes Responses

Concerns and successes reported for the entire group provide only general guidelines for planning an induction program or revising preservice training. Context and individual respondent characteristics are needed if understanding of the beginning teacher experience is to be complete, and appropriate induction supports provided (Veenman, 1984). Breakdowns of responses to the questionnaire developed for this study reveal how discrete subgroups within the sample experienced the early years of teaching. Findings for several variables believed salient in the nature of beginning teacher experience are summarized.

Years Teaching

Although many studies of beginning teacher concerns focus on the first year as the watershed experience, other research has highlighted a longer initiation period for those entering the profession (Boccia, 1989; Cohen & Klink, 1989; Fuller & Bown, 1975; Magliaro, Wildman, Niles, McLaughlin & Ferro, 1989). In this study, a review of the the breakdowns for concerns and successes by years of teaching supports the view of changing concerns and emerging competence over the first three years in the classroom.

Not surprisingly, first year teachers (n=26) had the highest mean response values on 16 of 32 professional concerns, 9 in the classroom category and 7 in the outside classroom group. Consistent with the notion of getting settled, or "surviving," they reported high concerns about knowing how things were done and finding resources (Odell, 1987), but surprisingly the lowest concern level of all groups responding on the issue of classroom control/management. In the success area, the first year teachers revealed a consistent pattern of moderate success in areas of relatively high concern.

Second year teachers (n=22) had quite a different profile in the concerns responses than their freshman or senior colleagues in this study. Indeed, the image of sophomore slump comes to mind in looking at the concerns and successes reported by second year teachers. Of the three groups, the second year teachers recorded four highest and 19 lowest mean response values in the 32 professional concerns categories. Their top concern was class control/management, followed by a number of instructional issues. In the success area, they had three highest topics but also the lowest levels of success on such survival issues as time management, finding resources and classroom management.

Third year teachers (n=12) were both most concerned and most successful of the groups responding. They scored highest in nine concerns and nine success areas and tended to have high concerns and high successes around the same topics. They also had low concerns scores in what might be considered survival issues.

Age of Respondent

For a variety of reasons, the teaching profession is attracting increasing numbers of older students, many of them second or mid-career adults who frequently do their preservice study in a graduate program. Yet most of the research on beginning teacher concerns seems to have focused on undergraduate trained, young adults embarking on their first career as teachers. Recently, researchers have begun to study this new population of novice teachers in an effort to determine if their early years in the field are qualitatively different from what we have assumed to be the typical new teacher initiation. Results from the first phase of this study suggested that, indeed, older beginning teachers had concerns of a different kind and intensity than what was reported in Veenman's (1984) review, and far less trauma in general than the celebrated "sink or swim" stories reported. In an effort to determine if and in what ways age related to professional concerns, we broke down responses in this study by age ranges of respondents.

The youngest teachers, those under 25 years old (n=9), had the highest concerns scores of all age groups on six topics, including seven scores of 4.0 or higher in the classroom category, yet

recorded the lowest between group scores on seven other concerns. There was no clear pattern to their high and low concerns, nor any apparent connection between concerns and successes for this group.

The 26-30 year old respondents, who comprised the largest single sub-group in the study (n=30), were less pronounced in their high and low concerns and successes. They had the highest mean response value for only one concerns topic, preparation/evaluation time, overall rated five topics at 4.0 or higher, and had the lowest concerns on four issues. They reported high success in teaching knowledge and skill areas, as well as student relations.

Those in their early 30's (n=9) were similar in their high concerns responses to the late twenties group, but they had the nine lowest between group means on professional concerns and the greatest success in student relation and classroom control/management of any other sub-group.

Most striking of all sub-group profiles is the data on respondents in the 36-40 age range (n=10). This group had overall the highest scores on both professional concerns and successes than any other age group. On 13 of 18 classroom concerns, they expressed more worry, and accorded scores of 4.0 or higher to 15 of the 18 topics. In similar fashion, they ranked 11 of 14 outside classroom concerns highest of all age groups, yet were in the mid-range of responses on the topics of stress and the lowest of all on isolation. At the same time, these late 30's teachers recorded the highest success rankings on eight of the 16 topics in that category, many of which echo their high concerns.

Finally, teachers over 41 years of age (n-=10) were highest in two concerns areas, understanding students with special needs and parent relations, but also highly concerned (4.0 mean value) about seven topics in all, most of which related directly to students. Conversely, this group had the lowest concerns level in 14 of 32 topics, many of them administrative and bureaucratic matters. Successes for the over-40 sample seemed consistent with the theme of their concerns, with all respondents reporting a great deal of success (3.0) on student relations and use of small groups for instruction, and high scores on humor and interdisciplinary teaching.

Context Variables

Among the context variables examined in relation to reported professional concerns were kind of community, classroom structure, class size, adequacy of building based help, and availability of classroom assistance. Distinctive response patterns were found for some of these breakdowns.

Kind of community seemed clearly related to frequency of high concerns in this study. Urban teachers (n=25) reported highest between group concerns on 17 of 32 topics, and rural teachers (n=9) on 13 of the 32. In the classroom category, urban teachers ranked as 4.0 or higher 10 topics including content, instructional and interpersonal matters. At the same time, they reported 9 highest success means, with student relations, humor and collegiality earning top marks. Rural teachers also had numerous high (4.0 or higher) concerns, rating eight issues as serious. These concerns seemed to cluster around administrative and instructional management issues. High success areas for rural teachers were student relations, content relevance and sense of humor. The third group of teachers, those in suburban schools (n=32) had only three high (4.0 or higher) concerns, including classroom control/management, and they reported successes in instructional and interpersonal efforts.

Classroom structure also seemed to relate to kind and intensity of professional concerns. Respondents in this study were principally assigned to self-contained classroom (n=38), team teaching situations (n=10), or support service settings (n=10). Of the three structures, the team teaching arrangement produced the highest concerns levels on 19 of the 32 topics, with 12 of the classroom category issues earning scores of 4.0 or higher. Team teachers also reported the lowest overall success rates, including scores for collegiality, interdisciplinary instruction and relations with students. Support service teachers evidenced the next highest concerns level, although much lower than the team teachers, with nine top-rated concerns; nonetheless, they had the highest success rates of the three groups, ranking highest on seven of 16 topics. Self-contained classroom

teachers had moderate to high concerns across the entire classroom category, moderate responses on outside classroom issues, and moderate to high success on a range of topics.

Surprisingly, teachers who believed building based help had been adequate (n=38) to them as new teachers had higher concerns levels on classroom issues than those who felt help provided had been inadequate (n=29). Conversely, those dissatisfied with the adequacy of help given to them had more outside the classroom concerns than their counterparts. In a similar vein, those teachers who had classroom assistance, such as an aide, (n=24) had more and greater classroom concerns than their peers who had no such assistance (n=43).

In this sample, class size did not appear to relate to levels of professional concerns or to successes, but anecdotal comments suggest that teachers felt more beleagured if they had classes of over 25 students.

Kinds of Assistance Beginning Teachers Want

In addition to reporting their concerns and successes, respondents in this study signified the kinds of professional assistance they would find most useful to them as beginning teachers. Table 4 lists the types of help identified by 25% or more respondents.

Table 4

Rank Order of Assistance Beginning Teachers Want Reported by Frequencies and Percentage of Responses
(n=68)

Rank Order	Topic	Frequency	Percentage
1	Opportunity to Observe Other Classes	53	78%
2	Opportunity to Share Experiences Other Beginning Teachers	47	69%
3	Workshops Specifically for Beginning Teachers	43	63%
4	Observation and Feedback from Other Teachers	39	58%
5	Mentor Teacher in Building	35	52%
6	More Resources for Teaching	32	47%
7	Fewer Students	26	38%
8	Graduate Courses In Teaching Strategies	20	30%
9-10	Fewer Duties	18	27%
9-10	More Observation and Feedback from Supervisors	18	27%
11	Telephone to University Faculty for Specific Questions	17	25%

While respondents indicated a diversity of assistance efforts they would find useful as new teachers, the concentration of responses on five specific forms of collegial help is notable. Each of the top five relate specifically to a collegial approach to learning to teach, and reinforce the growing body of literature in support of peer support and coaching as the optimal induction model (Friske & Coombs, 1986; Goodman, 1987; Jordell, 1987; Murphy, Merseth, & Morey, 1990; Odell, 1987; Wildman et al., 1989). Anecdotal responses to open-ended questions further clarify the centrality of a collegial approach for successful initiation into teaching.

Testimony to this group's commitment to induction support was the willingness of 87% to possibly or definitely participate in a university-based assistance program, and for more than half of these people to do so at least monthly on their own time.

DISCUSSION

The diversity of concerns reported in this study, and particularly the concentration of high

response levels on classroom-focused issues, confirms findings from much previous research on the scope and importance of various tasks encountered in the early years of teaching. Specific ranking of concerns and identification of the most important problem to beginning teachers seems less critical than understanding any patterns and themes a study like this reveals. In discerning and interpreting such patterns or themes in the beginning teacher experience, researchers are better able to understand common issues in initiation to the field, and better able to recommend induction programs that respond at both the generic and idiosyncratic levels.

In review of the findings from this study, it is apparent that beginning elementary teachers give more weight to concerns of an instructional than administrative or organizational nature. The respondents clearly focused on topics related to the teaching task, including planning for instruction and securing student engagement in learning. The various issues which might be considered external to the teacher-student-content interaction, such as record keeping and district administration, received little attention from this group of respondents. At the same time, issues connected to collegial relations emerged as important in numerous question categories, among them descriptions of orientation, evaluations of help provided, and perceived successes. Such attention to peer support belies the familiar picture of the teacher as loner, and points to a more dynamic and enriched teaching environment as these beginners mature in the profession.

While broad brush strokes outline the landscape of beginning teacher life, a finer study is required to understand the effect of respondent and context variables on the initiation process. Years of teaching, for example, clearly related in this study to the number, kind and intensity of beginning teacher successes and concerns. This finding supports Fuller and Bown's (1975) hypothesis about emergence of teacher concerns over time, as well as the findings of several other studies which looked at years of teaching as a variable in concerns levels (Cohen & Klink, 1989; Magliaro, et al., 1989; Wildman, 1989). These results suggests that induction efforts need to be differentiated by years of teaching experience in order to meet the changing needs of each group.

Chronological age of new teachers was also found in this study to relate to teaching

concerns for two categories of respondents. The under 25's were distinguished for great variability in their concerns levels and for having focused attention in a few key areas. Whether they overlooked other issues, or deliberately put aside all but the most pressing matters, is not known but the tightly focused nature of their responses seems consistent with the survival posture frequently associated with young beginning teachers. The 35-40 year old group had a much wider focal range in terms of concerns, giving high scores to nearly all issues. Yet this group seemed able to handle a multiplicity of concerns, as indicated by their low reports of stress. Possible explanation for their response patterns may be found in understanding of stages of adult development, and particularly that of career changers approaching mid-life.

Context variables also appeared to relate to the quality of beginning teacher experience in this study. The kind of community in which teachers worked seems to be a factor in their concerns about teaching. Urban and rural setting respondents reported higher concerns levels than did those in suburban schools. In urban sites, the diverse student population, numerous mandated programs, complex community issues and frequently limited resources may contribute to the high concerns of those who begin their teaching careers in city schools. Rural areas, on the other hand, often have small schools and staffs so that visibility and workload are greater for all teachers.

Within school structures seem to make a difference as well in the quality of the beginning teacher experience. Team teachers new to the profession revealed surprisingly high concerns level, an unexpected outcome given the inherent collegiality of the team assignment. Perhaps the expectations of competence and constant peer observation of performance that are part of a shared work setting put much higher pressure on beginning teachers than does the solo role of the self-contained classroom.

Also noteworthy were the high concerns levels of those respondents who had adequate help and/or classroom assistance. Again, the possibility exists that those who seek and receive assistance have, or perceive others have, higher expectations for their work than is the case for the teacher who goes it alone.

Beginning teachers in this study recognized the need, indeed requested in numerous anecdotal remarks, assistance in their initiation to the profession. The preference of respondents for collegial models of support rather than changes in their work conditions or addition of resources is notable. First, it may reflect a desire to replicate a key feature of their preservice program, membership in a cohort who shared an intensive nine months with a faculty team. Second, it clearly reflects the positive experience 96% had in working with an experienced teacher in the first years . Comments made by respondents suggest the power of such relationships: "for a beginning teachers, collegiality is a must;" "a lot of my needs were addressed voluntarily by staff. 'You'll need this...here's a copy of this;' " "every first year teacher should have a mentor;" "I learned the most important thing a colleague can give you is time."

IMPLICATIONS

Review of the findings in this study suggest next steps in several areas. At the preservice level, inclusion of research on beginning teachers in the program may better prepare graduates for their initial years. Field experience site selection might deliberately include a variety of community types and classroom structures to ready students for the kinds of settings in which they may find themselves as beginning teachers. Once in the field, new teachers need induction support which is responsive to their needs, compatible with the school setting in which they work, and consistent with the commitment to best practice which defines most preservice training. Accordingly, an assistance program which engages the beginning teacher, school building personnel, and university faculty in design and implementation offers the promise not only of support but of continued growth and increased confidence for new teachers. The variety of such programs described by Morey and Murphy (1990) in review of the California experience is illustrative of what can be done in such collaborative efforts.

In terms of further research, this study suggests the need for close attention to respondent and context variables in understanding the beginning teacher experience over at least a three year time

frame. In particular, the growing number of second career beginning teachers with their apparently distinctive initiation profile warrants discrete examination. As one 47 year old mother commented,"I think I have an advantage when it comes to distinguishing between myself and another person (big or little.) It also means I feel comfortable acting on some things and letting others lie." At the very least, this group may benefit from a differential induction program, and may also require some variation in preservice training to acknowledge and accommodate the rich and varied life experience they bring to the classroom. Finally, this study suggests the need for longitudinal, qualitative research on beginning teachers from their entry into the profession, through the tenure year, and beyond. Only with such data, generated in case study format for example, will those who prepare, hire, supervise and support new teachers really understand the nature of their experience and the most appropriate ways to ensure that it is productive and long-term.

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